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*"Pictures That Hang On  
Memory's Wall"*



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*"Pictures That Hang On Memory's Wall"*



Mark Shepard Family

Mark Shepard, George, Mrs. Shepard, Fern.

Earl, Alvin, Ora, Edith, Edwin.      Circa  
1893

# *“Pictures That Hang On Memory’s Wall”*



*“How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood,  
When fond recollection presents them to view”.*

H. FERN SHEPARD  
ST. LOUIS, 1965





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Opening a door to the "Room of Memories" we found a retreat in which to tarry while in retrospect we again enjoyed the pleasures and experiences of childhood.

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There is no chronological sequence to the several eras we have endeavored to bring into focus, nor is this in any sense a Biography or a Family History.

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## *Our Garden*

Through the years I came to realize that the passion for flowers that possessed me from earliest childhood must surely have been "born in me". I watched eagerly for the blossoms on each plant, shrub and tree that grew in our yard and walked blocks to search out flowers in other gardens. I harbored a mania to gather armsful of flowers - basketsful - big bouquets.

Edith purchased flower seed for me and helped me to plant it. The first real success was a row of sweet peas. She "sent away" for rose bushes. The name of the rose has long faded from memory but not the color - a lovely pink.

Long after the row of sweet peas and the pink rose, time came when I could go into the garden Ora and Henry shared with Edith and me - where I could gather armsful of flowers from early Spring through each season of the year.

Our last family garden was the source of great pleasure to all of us. To me it was something deeper than mere pleasure. It was a spot where the frustrations of the business world would fall away - where mental weariness vanished in physical effort. Beyond that, it was the fulfillment of a childhood longing to work with Nature in an effort to create things of beauty - not alone for my own gratification,

but to share with all who might find beauty in the modest violet - the stately lily or a bank of roses.

It is December 11, 1886 - the day I came to join our family living a short way up the path from "The Mill" where Father was employed.

The things Mother told me about the days when I was very young is the basis for my memory of those very early years. She frequently told me of the care our oldest brother, Alvin, took of me, relieving her for the many tasks of caring for our large family. I seem to recall Alvin taking me for a ride in the "wheel-barrow", stopping for my first visit with the old white mule that made his home in the Mill Barnyard. Mother said the first word I learned to say was "Jack". He came to the fence whenever anyone was in sight. Maybe he was lonesome - just a lonely "old white mule".

When I was about three, we moved to the Parker house - still within the shadow of "The Mill". I remember being taken to the new home but don't recall just how I got there. Brother Earl tells me he pushed me down the path in my buggy. Our new home was a larger house, shaded by tall pines and maple trees. Here was a large garden and a big fruit orchard.

The first unusual event I clearly recall occurred on May 7, 1890. There seemed to be strange things astir that morning. Finally, sister Edith told me there was a surprise for me in the front room. Firmly holding on to

her hand I walked in - slowly approaching the couch where I detected something all wrapped up in a blanket. Sister carefully removed the cover, announcing "you have a baby brother". That event stands out in my memory most vividly. I wasn't quite certain I wanted a baby brother. I seemed to sense somehow that this baby would be pushing me aside from the "center front" spot I had held as the more or less spoiled "little sister". However, we became close companions through all the years of childhood, sharing in the usual experiences of growing up.

One thing I most clearly remember about this baby brother is a dress Mother made for him. The long skirt was a lovely piece of embroidery in a very special design - the yoke and sleeves of a simpler pattern. A long time later, my favorite doll appeared under the Christmas Tree attired in the remnants of that very dress.

I next remember George in his high-chair, sitting between Mother and Father - his table place for a long time.

A family "Portrait", taken by an itinerant Photographer about 1893, is graphic evidence that the family was fast growing up. George is now wearing a kilt skirt with a white blouse - collar and cuffs ruffle trimmed. Mother put plenty of tucks in my new gingham dress - assurance that I could wear it next year.

## *My First Day At School*

It is September - 1892. Mother instructed brother Earl to see that I reached School safely and on time. I recall how bravely I tried to keep step with him as we proceeded up the street but found just keeping within sight of him was the very best I could do.

Get me there he did - and on time. I was presented at the door of the "Primary Room". Well do I remember the day. Miss Mary Pence, (Mrs. L. A. Richardson), was the Teacher. I still hear her say, "Good morning, children".

She quickly found something for each Beginner to do. I was called to the front of the room and told Louise Miller would help me write on the blackboard. Louise presented me with a piece of chalk and, holding my hand firmly in hers, guided my feeble efforts to acquire some small degree of skill in the Art of Penmanship.

My stay in Room-1 was limited to three days. The Room seemed to be fairly "bursting at the seams" - after due consideration, five of us were transferred to Room-2. The new Teacher? None other than our own sister Edith!

## *Today I Am Six Years Old*

*December 11, 1892*

When we were children, no particular celebration was arranged to honor our Birthdays.

Mother made certain we had the correct number of pennies to drop in the "Birthday Box" when the Sunday School Superintendent inquired "who had a Birthday this week?"

This day - my Sixth Birthday - was different. Cherished through the years and still among the treasures in our China Cabinet is a small cup and saucer, designed in pink and white. On the saucer a pair of birds watch over a nest of eggs - on the cup a small scroll, held by sprays of roses, reads:

*"For A Good Child"*

.....a gift from my brother Ed.

## *The Last Year of Our Public School Education*

Completing the Ninth Grade meant the end of our Public School Education. This last year, for me, opened many avenues of learning I had not previously enjoyed.

A completely fresh interest was aroused, particularly in History and Literature. What had been a rather tiresome lot of words suddenly came alive as a background for the Political and Cultural life of our own day. Works of early American Poets and Essayists took on a new meaning and even a glimpse into the words of Shakespeare began to stimulate our imagination and thinking.

The final class held on that last day of School was in Literature and "Portia", in the Court Room Scene of "The Merchant of Venice", declared:

"The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven  
Upon the place beneath: It is twice bless'd;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes".



## *In After Years*

Soon after leaving School we became aware that our education had only begun. We began to realize that there was a world outside the narrow sphere in which we lived - a world that would demand a wider knowledge than we had gained.

A few of our former classmates would gain this knowledge in Schools of Higher Education - others would find it in practical experience.

For our generation like each one before, there were mountaintop experiences and there were disappointments, disillusion and regret, but there was also ambition - faith in ourselves and an ever broadening vision.

Having picked up a few thoughts from out the long ago - walked along lanes of yester years - visited a while with those who shared our youth and who remain endeared forever in memory, we close the door to the "Room of Memories", grateful to those who patiently endeavored to guide our oft times faltering progress along those paths.

The host of memories that reflect the tempo of our adult years is a thing apart from our youth.

"If we could select our memories - could choose to keep from the past only the translucent moments, we would string them to wear as amulets against the pressures of the future.

But memory does not allow us to choose - we reach for a shining moment and are pricked by the sharp edge of a broken dream. We find a rose pressed long ago in a book and its thorns are as sharp as the day we put them there."

- *Selected* -

He who "Holds the Whole World in His Hands" knows each shining moment and every broken dream.

From the many strands of golden sunlight and the threads of darkened shadows, the "Master Weaver" will create the Tapestry of our Lives when day is done.

H.F.S.

1965

*The Mill* was "home base" for many of the activities George and I shared as children.

The fact that Father was Engineer in control of the mysteries of the Engine Room left no doubt in our

minds that we held proprietary rights to go wherever fancy took us. We wandered at will from cellar to roof, each following his own interest.

I ventured fearlessly into the Office, guarded by the watchful eye of Louis Brandes - sat perched on the high stool at his desk - helped turn the wheel on the Letter Press where, with wet press cloths and tissue sheets, he made copies of important correspondence - no typewriters or carbon paper were even thought of. I watched as he manipulated the huge scale that weighed each farmer's load of wheat that came in when threshing was in progress.

Characteristic with his gentle manner, Father never seemed annoyed as we followed him around in the Engine Room. Even as children we seemed to realize that here was the very pulsebeat of all we knew as "THE MILL". The iron-doored furnace fed by great shovels of coal heated the boilers to create steam - the big fly-wheel moved round and round and in some manner, beyond our comprehension, set in motion the "engine" and Father with his longnosed oil cans kept it all in working order.

A favorite haunt of mine was the corner reserved for the flour packers. It was such fun to watch them fit the sack to a machine that fed the flour - release it at the right minute - quickly sew up the sack and send it away to the warehouse ready for "shipping out". Should the right one be handling the truck, I stood a

pretty good chance of a ride back from the warehouse.

Curiosity overtook me one day. As I watched Joe testing the flour on a little metal slide, I asked him what was in that bottle that he always sprinkled over the flour. Very confidentially he whispered "pigeon milk" - with no indication that he may have thought - "that'll teach her not to ask questions".

To George and me no Lake was any bigger than our "Mill Pond" where we fished with bent pin hooks. Looking under loose boards and stones for fishing worms was not too bad, but it took a lot of self-discipline and courage to get that worm on the hook. They told us there were lots of fish in that pond but we were never able to prove it. But there were other things - big green frogs and little brown toads and sometimes a turtle. Tadpoles swam, or "wiggled" along the edge of the water. We caught them in the empty worm can and carefully carried them home. Somehow they never did turn into "frogs" as they told us they would.

The "Cooper Shop", where the flour barrels were made, was another favorite spot. The rhythmic "rat-a-tat-tat" of the coopers' hammers and the pungent, acrid odor of charred wood as they "fired" each barrel, comes back clear as when, on a summer afternoon I sat at the open door, fascinated by the uniform movements of each cooper.

## *The Pasture Behind The Barn*

It is raining - a hard, pouring, summer rain. Water will be running in the pasture branch.

I hurry down to see if my effort to build a rock dam across the branch has been effective in creating the *Waterfall* I had planned.

No builder cares to dwell upon his failures, so we draw the curtain against that episode.

Long years later a glimpse of that branch behind the old barn and my fruitless, childish effort to create a waterfall flashed before me as I looked in wonder upon tons of water falling from the crest of a lofty mountain - water tumbling over giant rocks on its way to a swift flowing river or some quiet valley stream.

## *The Sweet Briar Rose*

A rose grew on the bank of that pasture branch - a sweet briar rose. Its single, delicate pink flowers shed a fragrance unlike any other.

In later years, as I worked among scores of roses created by renowned rosarians, I searched in vain for that certain fragrance.

A half-century later, in a Wild Rose that grew among the rocks along the path to our Cabin at "Columbine Lodge", Blanche and I found that same fragrance - the fragrance of the Sweet Briar Rose that flourished in the old pasture back home.

## *The Big Storm*

Mother was deep in preparation of food for the Annual School Picnic to be held the next day.

A strange, ominous sort of feeling prevailed the atmosphere, made more evident by the slow, mournful tolling of the Church Bell. Little Helenschen Kircheis, one of George's Schoolmates had passed away.

Suddenly great thunderheads rolled in from the Southwest; bolts of lightning rent the heavens; winds of terrific force left shambles in its course; rain fell in torrents.

"The Great Tornado of '96" had struck the St. Louis area. Its force, considerably lessened, spread over our town and the country side. Debris from the heavily stricken area tumbled through the air, dropping as far as thirty to forty miles away from St. Louis. Wearing apparel hung from trees and was caught in wire fences along open fields. Paper was strewn abroad for miles around.

There had been storms before and there have been storms of tornado intensity since, but within our experience, none to equal the one on that late day in May - 1896.

We were stirred by mixed emotions - the frightening storm and the echo of the tolling bell but, in the nature of all children, we began to think of tomorrow and The School Picnic.



## *A Cold Winter's Saturday Morning*

Fresh snow fell all through the night. The roads were just right for sleigh riding.

Earl rushed in with “am taking some of the girls out in the sleigh—help me get Old Nell’s harness from upstairs and I’ll give you a ride”. That harness never came down as fast before.

Always prepared for any emergency, Mother had bricks warming in the cook stove oven all morning. Quickly they were wrapped in an old blanket - arranged among the lap robes and we were off.

Music of the sleigh bells - the rhythmic sound of “Old Nell’s” hoofs against the crystal snow is another strain of the “Symphony of Memories”.

## *Sunday School and the Church*

The MARINE CHRISTIAN CHURCH - which had its beginning in a rural School House early in 1860.

Sunday School and The Church were an important part of our childhood. My earliest recollection of Sunday School is sitting in the front Pew where our feet barely touched the floor. Here we learned to sing:

“Jesus loves me this I know  
For the Bible tells me so.”

. . . . .

“I’ve two little hands  
To work for Jesus,  
Two little lips His praise  
To tell.”

Moving on to the next Class we were singing “Jesus wants me for a sunbeam.”

Through our early years with much patience our Teachers worked earnestly to teach us such fundamental Bible truths as our youthful minds could understand. Here gradually we learned “The Lord’s Prayer” and “The Golden Rule”. Eventually we could repeat “The Ten Commandments” - the “Twenty-third Psalm” and “The Beatitudes”.

Never erased from memory is the Church as I knew it in childhood and early youth - the various individuals who were the Church itself - its organization and its place in the Community.

By some magic, could we remove the curtain of time that separates that era from our present day, I would know just where to find each faithful member seated. Echoes of the Hymns sung - the sound of voices much loved - remain vibrant in memory.

The long, dramatic Prayers of one or another of the Deacons and the lengthy Discourses of some of the Men of the Pulpit were beyond the conception of the younger congregation, but we could later look back on it as the foundation of some understanding of Christian principles.

Through my early adult life, I was privileged to sit under the teaching of a number of outstanding Bible Teachers but later, when confused by the stress and tension of the business world and the pressures of daily living, frequently my mind laid hold of the simple truths learned in the Church back home - the basic truth that it is by FAITH that we are saved for Eternity and it is by Faith we live - "Faith - the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". (Hebrews 11:1)

There was a pleasant Social interest in the life of the little Church. Sunday School Picnics and Nut

Gathering Parties in Mr. Jeffress woods; Ice Cream Socials with plenty of lemonade and mountains of cake; Strawberry Festivals on someone's lawn or in the Village Park. An exciting event was the day Mother entertained the "Ladies Aid". There were days of preparation; the family sized dining table was rolled into the Sitting Room; the best linen cloth was put into service and "company" dishes were on the table. It is a fair assumption that "Pressed Chicken" was the "piece de resistance" with fresh home-made bread and rolls - peach pickles and pear preserves and always cake for dessert. There was plenty of food for we children at the "second table".

## *Christmas When We Were Children*

Christmas really began when sister Edith made plans to go to the "City" for shopping. A trip to the City meant a ride in Nick Ulrich's "hack" to St. Jacob - then via train into St. Louis. The family was astir early that morning, listening for Nick's call "All aboard". I do not recall just how Nick announced himself. Mother told us a Driver of the much earlier years came along the Village streets blowing a "bugle". Nick carried not only those who wished to "catch" the train at St. Jacob, but he was also "Mail Carrier" and "Express Agent" as well. Sister's return in late evening was awaited anxiously but most of her packages disappeared very mysteriously.

The Sunday School Christmas Program was the high light of Christmas Eve. A huge evergreen tree brought in from the woods filled a corner just off from the Pulpit. It was trimmed with yards and yards of tinsel. Hand strung ropes of popcorn festooned its branches that blossomed with gay ornaments . . . always an angel at the very top. The breathless moment came when the Tree was lighted. This part of the Program was given over to the men of the Church. They carefully lighted each taper - watched to see that none came too near to the easily ignited branches. Long sticks, topped with wet sponges, were kept in readiness to prevent even one spark to flare into ever so small a flame.

The Birth of the Christ Child in a lowly manger - the Shepherds awakened by the Angel Chorus - the Wise Men who followed the Star, told in Song and Story was, of course, the theme of the Program. Strains of "Silent Night" still float through the starlit skies on each Christmas Eve.

## *At Home*

There was no mantle from which to hang our Christmas Stockings but the back of Father's rocking chair served quite well. The excitement of Christmas Morning! No single word describes it.

Many of our first toys were hand made by Mother or Father or some other member of the family. If a doll "handed down" through the years had in some way lost a leg, Father carved a new pair out of wood - painted the "stockings" flesh-colored and the shoes black. If a hand was missing, Mother fashioned new ones from an old kid glove, stitching the fingers. There was a cupboard for my dishes - Alvin's scroll saw cut a design in each door. One of George's gifts that delighted me as much as it did him was a Tool Chest with real enough tools that "worked". Am sure Mother kept an eye on me for fear I would remodel all the furniture.

As we grew older, there was a little Engine with a boiler that held a few tablespoons of water - heated by an alcohol lamp, this created steam. The fly-wheel turned round and round as fly-wheels should and there was a *whistle*. George says, "trouble with the little engine was, if we blew the whistle, it took so much steam the fly-wheel slowed down to a stop".

Many of the gifts we found under our Christmas Tree arrived in those mysterious packages sister Edith brought home from the City. We cannot forget the Dolls. There were "Rosie" - "Violet" and "Pansy", as well as George's "Lily Doll" and "Hans Peter". Poor "Hans Peter" - he was left out under the raspberry bushes one night - it rained and his red underwear faded on his nice tan overalls.

"Rosie" - "Violet" - "Lily Doll" and Nancy's fair haired doll that looks like a twin to George's "Lilly", lie in my bureau drawer, awaiting that long promised day when I will endeavor to restore them to some degree of their original charm. I may sew up the tears that fairly weep sawdust - find a wig for "Violet" and make them some pretty clothes, but who is there to love them as we did in that far away land of childhood.

.....and the Paper Dolls - there was the one that had many "take off and put on" costumes—hats included. There were the "Pattern Books" Miss Barbara, the Village Dressmaker, gave me when their styles became slightly out moded. These provided hours of delight in cutting out and creating whole families of "paper dolls". And who would ever forget the "Scrap Books" with all their delightful, colorful pictures!

With Spring came "Kite Flying Time". George and I frequently fashioned our own kites. He was usually able to come up with the two sticks to make the frame - (think probably Father had something to do with



that). Then came a search for just the right paper to glue to the frame. The paste was a bit of flour from Mother's flour bin and some water in an old teacup. The tail usually came out of Mother's scrap bag and the twine was hoarded from one "flight" to another. Like Space Ships of today - the flight was not always successful - either the wind died down before we got our craft into the air or an unexpected gust sent it spinning into the top of some big tree. Well, we just tried another day.

But we were the envy of the entire neighborhood when Edith or Mother brought us a "Bird Kite" from a shopping tour in Edwardsville. A Bird Kite? Well - it was a Japanese creation of colorful paper, shaped like wings of some big bird - a real "sensation" when it went into flight.

## *“Sam - The Peddler”*

“Old Ringo” frantically announced the approach of a stranger. A glance down the street and I hurried to tell Mother “Sam - the Peddler” was coming.

His annual visits created a certain air of excitement. George and I watched in eager anticipation while he carefully opened his Pack. The back porch became his Salesroom. No Variety Store today arouses our interest as did the array of merchandise Sam had in that big Pack.

There seemed to be everything anyone could want . . . -skillets, big stew pans and little ones, with lids to fit them all . . . knives and forks - spoons, ladles and egg beaters, strainers and can openers - cake pans and pie tins - tin cups and dust pans. Now - what would Mother buy? After due consideration, her choice was a flour sifter and some new pie tins.

Sam was pleased with his sale. Brother and I watched while he carefully replaced each article to assure proper balance when he again strapped the huge pack to his back.

He was more than a Peddler. As he moved along the country roads he was an anticipated visitor. He carried with him more than his pack of wares - he

brought news from each farm house to the neighbor down the road. As he traveled through villages along the way he found food and lodging and to all who listened he had many tales of his adventures along the road.

## *“The Armenian Lady”*

“The Armenian Lady” - another Traveling Merchant with her bag of treasures. It was thought she, too, came by for a visit with old friends. What she had to sell was incidental until she had enjoyed whatever Mother might have for her refreshment and she had rested from her long walk along dusty roads.

She brought things to delight every one. Yards of lace and pretty embroidery to trim a new dress or a dainty pinafore. There were buttons and thread - needles and pins - hooks and eyes - combs and hair pins. Ribbons of gay colors - lace table cloths - tidies - towels and handkerchiefs - pin cushions and pretty needle books - thimbles and knitting needles. The sale completed, she settled back for a visit. Delighted to have found an attentive ear, her thoughts wandered back to her homeland. She told of the valley where she had lived - the luscious grapes and fruit bearing trees that drew on the hillsides - a picture drawn in words as she told of life as she had known it as a child . . . A place which, in the limited vision of youth, seemed to me lost in the far away distance.

..... and the call “Umbrellas to mend”. Many a family umbrella continued long in service because the “Umbrella Man” had come by to replace a broken rib and repair the handle.

As *Sam-The Peddler - The Armenian Lady* and their many counterparts faded from the scene, a bit of color that had enriched life in homes along the country roads became only a memory . . . another facet of our "Americana" was added to the tales of yesteryears.

## *The Village Blacksmith*

Just a short way up the street was a Shop both George and I frequented during our early teens.

Fred Stuckwish was not only the "Village Blacksmith" - he was our neighbor and a friend.

Standing at the open door of his shop on a summer afternoon I watched the orange colored sparks fly from the red hot horseshoes he was shaping on the anvil.

Fred was never too busy to answer our questions - foolish as they may have seemed. Strange and interesting tools lay all about his anvil - others hung against the open forge - long handled tongs for holding the metal as he carefully turned it in the hot coals of the forge.

There were plowshares to be heated - hammered and shaped to properly cut into the unplowed fields. There were mower blades to be sharpened by the proper use of an emery file - wagon wheels and buggy wheels, their tires to be reset. Horses were brought in for shoes to be fashioned and fitted, whether for travel on the open road or work in the fields about the farm.

The high light of the afternoon came when Fred

called, "come pump the bellows for me". Thrilled and excited, I watched closely as he adjusted the smoldering coals. The slowly intensified heat fired the metal to the proper degree for shaping by skillful use of the big hammers against the anvil.

The glow of that open fire has not faded. Hammers striking the anvil created rhythmic sounds that have reverberated in memory - a strange, lingering strain of music.

## *The First Flowers of Springtime*

No sooner had Winter given place to the warm sunshine and balmy air of Spring than, in sheltered corners of the yard, "Violets" could be found. Barely rising above the brown earth, their soft blue petals seemed to reflect the azure hue of Springtime skies. The dainty, fragile "Spring Beauties" appeared here and there in grassy places. Soft gray "catkins" popped up on branches of the "Pussy Willow".

In the woods near by, along what we knew as "Blanke's Lake", wild flowers wakened to the warm breezes of Spring. Ferns unfurled their delicate fronds and the white and yellow "Wild Violets" nestled among them. "Blue Bells" and "Dutchman's Breeches" - gold-crested white "Blood Root" - "Jack-in-the-Pulpit" and the fragrant "May Apple", with myriads of less familiar natives of the woods, soon covered the hillside. To be included in an Annual Excursion into the woods at Springtime was a true delight.

Suddenly the whole garden came into bloom - the bright yellow "Jonquils" and the sweet-scented white "Narcissus" that grew under the grape vines. In rapid succession came blossoms on the "White Lilac" close by the front fence and the red bush "Honeysuckle" and huge "Snowball" along the walk to the orchard. Soon the orchard itself was a big bouquet - birds returned for



nesting and each morning came the music of their mating songs.

Around Mrs. Eaton's red brick walk, "Blue Flags" (dwarf iris), marched as if on parade - "Johnny-jump-ups" bloomed in profusion in Grandma Retzbach's garden - a bank of "Lilies of the Valley" edged the walk around the Baumgardner house. Too timid to beg entrance to the Pfister garden, I peered through the fence for a glimpse of the brown and yellow "Primroses" that few gardeners could boast of.

Mrs. Doggett's flowers knew no season. All winter long her south windows were a display of beauty - colorful and gay. I was practically speechless when she asked me to see a rare Lily that was in blossom and her real live *Orange Tree* - in bloom and bearing tiny ripe oranges.

That visit with dear Mrs. Doggett, among her lovely flowers and that sure enough Orange Tree, stirred my emotions far more than when, long, long years later, I first visited the famous "Jewel Box" in Forest Park.

## *It Is Spring!*

Spring - evidenced by a general upheaval in every well organized household. Carpets hung on the line to be dusted, beaten, swept or cleaned according to each housekeeper's own special method. Feather beds, pillows - wool blankets and winter quilts were well aired, always on a sunny, balmy sort of a day. Every window was washed and the screens brought down from the attic. Curtains were washed and ironed - special care given to the lace "parlor" curtains which had to be carefully pinned on "stretchers" and placed to dry.

In the midst of all this, a corner of Mother's mind was given to plans for the traditional Fourth of July dinner - fried chicken, fresh peas and new potatoes, with home-made ice cream.

The "weatherman" would determine whether the garden would produce the new potatoes and fresh peas, and the fried chicken would depend on the whims and fancies of one or another of the old hens scratching around in the orchard.

Mother shopped carefully among the neighbors for a "sure to hatch" setting of eggs to be turned over to the care of the first hen who indicated she was ready to take on the responsibility of raising a family.

I thought I was for sure being initiated into the business of raising chickens when Mother permitted me to "mark" the eggs to be placed under the prospective mother hen. This, I was told, was done to tell them apart from a fresh egg some other hen might sneak in and deposit in the nest. This identification was accomplished with the stopper from the bluing bottle - the design created was immaterial.

The calendar was marked to a date three weeks hence. As this date approached the eggs were carefully watched. This inspection was to determine if by chance some frisky little rooster might be pecking at his shell - demanding an exit. On their first appearance, these wee chicks were a sorry looking sight, but they improved quickly when put in a soft lined basket and placed behind the warm kitchen stove. Within a few days the entire flock was ready to take up life under the shelter of their mother's wing and learn to peck away at food provided for them in their protected shelter.

Somehow, as I eat chicken today, I have a feeling that it just isn't chicken at all. It is something scientifically created with never a mother's wing to nestle under - no mother to talk to it in her "cluck, cluck" language - to scratch for it or lead it off to the far reaches of the orchard where the biggest and choicest worms and bugs were to be found.

We listen in vain for the crow of the old rooster and the cackle of the hens but bow to change and the path of progress as we order chicken for dinner.

## *Memorial - "Decoration Day"*

Looking back sixty years or more to "Decoration Day", May 30th, one of the very special Holidays of the year.

August 12, 1862, Company G of the 117th Illinois Regiment, was organized at Marine, Ill., with volunteers from Highland, Alhambra, St. Jacob and Marine. When mustered out at Camp Butler, Springfield, Ill., on August 6, 1865, a goodly number returned to the area in and around Marine. Many identified themselves with "The Grand Army of The Republic" - the "G.A.R." and despite the passing of years, remained united in interests as well as memories.

The Community came to regard these men with a feeling of respect and they gradually became known as "The Old Soldiers". Through the years interest was shown in paying homage to them on "Decoration Day" with a Program Celebration in the Village Park. Decorating the grave of each departed Comrade became a time honored part of the Celebration.

When we were children, Mother assumed considerable responsibility in seeing there was a plentiful supply of flowers. Early in the morning Earl was dispatched to the Boosinger farm to bring in the

special flowers Mrs. Boosinger took pride in gathering from her garden. My assignment, accomplished more or less in fear and trembling, was to rap at Miss Louise Keown's gate. Miss Keown was the Village recluse who lived alone behind a high board fence and a firmly locked gate. This, however, was the one occasion when she welcomed me and shared freely the flowers from the garden and blossoms from a vine that sheltered her doorway. It seemed that tucked away in her strange mind she held a peculiar fondness for our Mother.

The Program began in early afternoon. Escorted by the Village Band, the Veterans were seated on the platform. Flower girls, teen-age daughters of the Veterans, were near by. School children in full attendance were there to sing "America" - "The Star Spangled Banner" and perhaps "Tenting on The Old Camp Ground". A Village clergyman reverently opened the Program and the Chairman of the day extended welcome to every one. Perhaps one of the school children would recite a popular war-time poem. "The Blue and The Gray" was a favorite. Then came the Address of the afternoon - usually by a Lawyer from the County Seat-or some Political aspirant.

A parade from the Park to the lower edge of town was led by the Band, followed by the Veterans and the twelve Flower Girls, dressed in white and carrying flag trimmed baskets of flowers. Arriving at the Cemetery, the "Firing Squad" fired the Salute of Honor. The Flower Girls, proudly carrying our baskets, moved

about the graves of departed Comrades, placing flowers on each grave - a tribute to their memory.

The Memorial Day came when Father - the last survivor of the Marine Civil War Veterans - took his place on the platform with Veterans of World War - One . . . . loyal always to the memory of his Comrades of "Company G" and "The Grand Army of The Republic". Father passed away in December-1932.

## *Fourth Of July*

Echoes of the traditional “ANVIL SALUTE” broke the early morning quiet. *IT IS THE FOURTH OF JULY*. Flags, large and small, waved triumphantly from practically every doorway or gatepost.

Many nickel and dime “allowance” found its way to Mrs. Frey’s Novelty Shop. The “pop-pop-pop” of “fire crackers” and “torpedos” and the excited outbursts of children up and down the streets kept anxious mothers dashing in and out of doors to see whether her John or Mary had really been a victim to some misdirected “cracker”.

Plans carefully laid through days of preparation began to unfold. “The Turnverein”, (Turners’ Society), staged a time honored Celebration for the Village and all The Countryside. At the appointed hour the Village Band led the Parade to Turners’ Park.

Events of the day as a “Picnic” seem to have left little impression on me, but I do most vividly recall Father, with me by the hand, edging our way through a group gathered around a deep pit where what I remember Father said was “half a beef” was secured to some contraption that permitted it to be turned over and over above a bed of fire. Men with a sort of “mop” arrangement on a long stick were swabbing this huge piece of meat with something they mixed up in a

bucket. Whether, in the course of the day, we were served any of this gigantic "barbecue" I don't seem to remember.

No Fourth of July Celebration was complete without "Fireworks" and this was no exception. The seat of operation for what proved to be a most thrilling and exciting event was arranged in an open field across the Lake. There were "rockets" - huge "stars", "fountains" and "flower pots"..... a great display of the so-called "Pyrotechnic Art", but to us just "Fireworks" that called forth a loud chorus of "ha's and ho's" from children and grown-ups alike.

All this - and that big piece of meat cooking over a fire burning deep down in a hole in the ground!



## *“The Maples”*

Earl spent summer vacations on the farm of Mr. Jeffress, whose home, “The Maples”, was one of the show places of the countryside.

Brother often worked in the garden, a well landscaped area just off the south lawn. He told us wonderful stories of all that grew in that garden. I was quite certain “Shaw’s Garden”, a place in the “City” I had heard of, couldn’t possibly surpass it in variety nor beauty. There was a true enough “*Magnolia Tree*” in that garden! And a “*Green Rose*” - the petals of the blossoms were green!

One lovely summer afternoon Mr. Jeffress, aided by his Housekeeper, Miss Keller, entertained the “Ladies’ Aid”. Mother took me with her. The garden was at its best. I recall Miss Keller guiding me along its many paths, and sure enough - there was that “Green Rose”.

And the food! A long table was laden with all the delicacies one in his standing would take pride in serving guests. Such cakes! None of the “puny” one or two layer variety we now think sufficient, but four and five layer creations. There was a “Watermelon Cake” I have never quite forgotten. It was a loaf cake - the center tinted “watermelon pink” with a scattering of

raisins to indicate seeds and then a lesser portion of white to represent the rind. What child would not marvel at so great a departure from the ordinary?

We did not visit the Pond where fish were trained to come to the water's edge for food at specific times during the day. However, Edith and Ora, on another occasion, were treated to the pleasure of a stroll along the path to the Pond. The hospitality of their Host faded somewhat during the following days while they struggled to recover from the misery of having been attacked by *chiggers*.

The well wooded areas of Mr. Jeffress' farm were always open to the young people for picnics during the summer and in the Fall the big hickory and walnut trees yielded bushels of nuts for the gathering.

## *The Railroad Comes to Marine*

No where can I find records of the year the Railroad was built into our town. A bit of calculation places the date early in the 1890's. George says he was too young to remember and my own recollection of all that went into this great event is a bit vague. Somehow, I do remember all the excitement of new families moving into town.

There were Surveyors and men to lay the tracks. Bridge Builders constructed a span across "Silver Creek" - a fete that created as much interest, speculation and comment as we now hear when a new Bridge is thrown across the Mississippi.

In short, our quiet Village fairly teemed with excitement. Social life quickened and several of the new "Railroad Men" found wives among the charming young ladies of town.

The Western Union Office was moved from a desk in the rear of Richardson's Drug Store to the newly constructed Railroad Depot - now well equipped to handle Telegrams for the entire Community as well as take "Train Orders".

This I recall quite clearly - when service between Marine and St. Louis was finally established, the

townspeople were Guests of the Railroad on a Sunday Trip to St. Louis and return. Excitement ran high! How many of our family were included in this trip I do not recall, but I was one of them.

The coming of the Railroad was the beginning of a completely new era for our Village and the entire Community.

Eventfully - *Marine* - became a Station on the Map of the *Illinois Central Railroad* - St. Louis to Chicago Division.

## *The Train Whistle*

Sound of the whistle on the "Vandalia Train" seems to echo and re-echo through the country side as it moved through St. Jacob into the distance beyond. No words seem to truly express thoughts stirred by that memory. Sometimes it was a strange sort of sound; Sometimes there seemed to be something gay about it, as if it would urge those who listened to travel along to "Far away places with strange sounding names".

Thumbing through my Scrap-book, I chanced upon words of another who in memory still hears that sound. His artistry of words blends the sound of the train whistle into a symphony of voices of yesteryears - a symphony that will never be complete - each year adding other strains as the music of our Nation goes on.....

*(Clipped from Editorial Page of Globe Democrat)*

"*Train Whistle*" - Remember the far-reaching, lonesome sound of the whistle in the days when steam engines came puffing and clattering into the small villages?

Train whistles have sounded far across the level prairies; they have sent their message along fertile river valleys; their lonesome, high pitched whoo-who-who-who has echoed among hills and

mountains. There was something familiar and yet strangely mysterious about the long-drawn call in the darkness of night as the train rushed along like a jeweled snake.

Men and boys gathered in small gray depots across the nation to wait for a train to come in with the milk cans and the egg crates and the thin sound of the whistle was pleasant to hear.

A train whistle is primarily a practical thing. It blows for the country-side crossings and to herald the train's arrival at a depot. But before the era of the Diesel with its brassy blast, a train whistle was more than a utilitarian warning. It spoke of conquest of frontiers; it told of mountain passes and vast plains compassed by man. Time marches on; new techniques serve man - but there are those who remember the days when the train whistle sounding across the hills was a part of American life."

Wonder if he who wrote these words ever sat with passengers around the Depot's "potbellied" stove on a cold winter's morning, waiting for the "Fast" train for the City. If the Station Agent was not on hand, did he "flag" down the train with a lighted newspaper when the light of the Engine came into sight. Wonder if he was ever one of a group gathered at the Station on a Sunday evening to visit a while with friends returning to the City after a weekend with home-folks. Did he ever get off the 10:30 PM "Special" and walk alone across town only here and there a faint light shining through a shaded window.

We needed no latch-key when we reached home -  
the folks were still up - waiting eagerly for news of all  
that happened since our last visit home.

## *The End of The School Year*

For the lower grades the closing days of May were filled with excitement. Hours were spent in preparing for the "Annual School Entertainment", as each room planned a Program to be given in the Turner Hall.

This Program provided an opportunity to present pupils especially talented in Music - Expression - Dramatics and the like. The less talented provided the always important background.

The great night finally arrived. Excitement ran high - each Teacher was anxious that her Pupils' performance would be a credit to each of them and to her effort in training them.

The Hall was filled with proud parents and admiring friends. The occasion was always one of Community interest and appreciation.



## *The School Picnic*

Then came the last event of the year - the School Picnic. A parade, lead by the Village Band, marched down Main Street. Each room closely followed a leader carrying a flower trimmed banner which bore the Room number and in bold lettering some well learned motto or maxim. The Picnic grounds was Turner's Park, about a mile from town.

The usual picnic games were arranged and properly supervised and there were swings hung from the high trees - lucky was the girl with either a father or a big brother to push her swing higher and higher while she "squealed" louder and louder. A big thrill was a ride on the boat that was rowed back and forth across the small lake at the foot of the hill.

A high light of the day was the Picnic Dinner spread on long tables under the deep shade - food of every description and in an unbelievable abundance.

Then there was the Band Stand which served also as the Refreshment Stand. A dime was the usual amount allotted us for some special treat. I still see the assortment of candy displayed and remember what a problem it was to decide just how best to invest my dime.

As the day wore on, patience and endurance of both Teachers and mothers was at low ebb - the exuberant spirit of the children faded. The School Picnic came to an end and with it the end of the School Year.

## *A Sunday Afternoon Drive*

We had no two-seated "Surrey with Fringe on Top". When George and I were children, Father arranged an extra seat in the buggy for us - the dash-board served as a back for our improvised seat and we sat facing Mother and Father as we rode along.

A particular drive I recall took us north of town. Mother called our attention to the farm on which she grew up. Her family and several of their kin and near-kin had "migrated" from points in Western Ohio to the vicinity of Marine, Illinois, in 1854, having come via the Ohio River from Cincinnati to Cairo, Ill. and up the Mississippi River from Cairo to St. Louis.

Much of the area surrounding their farm had not yet been put into cultivation and she told us how as a young girl she rode "bare-back" across miles of verdant prairies.

Near by her home was the Keown property on which during the late 1850's or early 1860's a brick home was built - quite imposing in both size and style of architecture. While there were many large, substantially built brick and frame houses built early in the settlement of the area, most of them were constructed along much less aesthetic lines.

Mother frequently told us of when her father worked as a mason in the construction of this home. A story that came down through the years told of how Laura, one of the small children, was seriously injured when a piece of slate fell from the roof, striking the child on her head. The part of the story that always amazed me as a child was that "the Doctors put a *silver plate* in her head". I kept wondering how she could live carrying a silver plate around in her head - but she did - and lived to be a beautiful young lady. This story flashes through my mind when walking through the cemetery I chance to notice the stone marked, "Laura Keown Moore".

Through the years, the Keown place became sort of a rendezvous for friends of their young people. I recall how much brother Ed enjoyed riding horseback with Daisy and Page across their open fields.

Mrs. Keown had a marked "patrician" air about her. As I think of her seated in her accustomed place at Church, dressed in a black silk dress and wearing a black velvet bonnet, I think of nothing more descriptive of her appearance than that she looked like pictures of an "English Dowager".

When I was about twelve or thirteen years old, Annie and Nellie Evans, grandchildren of the family, invited their schoolmates to a party one lovely summer afternoon - Aunt Daisy, home for a visit, was their Hostess. All starched and be-ribboned, dressed in our

very best, we were more or less breathless with excitement.

All of the original family had long since passed away or had sought business adventures elsewhere - with the exception of one son, a bachelor. Much of the splendor of the original furnishings and general decor had faded somewhat, but that mattered not. To me, it was still that more or less "Fairylane Manor" and the home of Mother's old friend, Mrs. Keown.

As the party progressed, I remember some of the guests engaged themselves in discussing whose petticoats were starched the "stiffest". Any well dressed young lady wore no less than three and often another under their summer frocks.

I seemed to be more interested in that big front door that opened into a spacious Reception Hall, out of which rose a wide, winding stairway to the second floor. I wondered if the children had been allowed to slide down that nice wide bannister rail.

To one side of the hall opened "Double Parlors", separated by folding doors, each room equipped with a huge fireplace. On the rear wall of the "Back Parlor" hung a mirror, reaching from floor to ceiling - the likes of which I, of course, had never seen. Refreshments were served in the Dining Room, equally spacious as the other rooms. And, we were told, the Ball Room was on the third floor.

After many, many years, within perhaps the past decade or two, oil wells have been drilled on the property and it has finally come into the possession of a gentleman and his wife who have spent time, energy and much expense in an effort to restore the house without destroying any of the original structural lines.

So the house Grandfather Weist helped to build so long, long ago, still stands, seemingly as a memorial to one of the early settlers of Marine Township and whose family participated in the educational and cultural activities of the Village.

We continue our Sunday afternoon ride - on past "The Maples", Mr. Jeffress' home, and the Seibert School where the Marine Christian Church was organized on April 7, 1860 - then on up to the cross roads passed the Harrington farm, where once the name Harrington stood for fast horses and racing. Close by had been the home of the Eaves Family, another of the early settlers. As I view TV "Westerns", I recall stories Mother told us of how the Eaves boys and their neighbors, the five Boyer brothers delighted in racing into town on horseback, firing their guns in all directions. Am sure these escapades predated the Civil War as I also recall her telling of the death of one or more of the Boyer boys on the Southern Battlefields.

On down the road we came to the "Conn School House", where Mother went to School. Along the road

toward town was the Stanton farm where Father lived for a time on returning from service in the "Army of the North".

As we rode along, Mother or Father pointed out farms occupied during those early days by the Enos family - the Buckles - the McCains - the Ellisons - the Judds - the Sherwoods - the Barrs - the Crandalls - the Briggs - the Boosingers and the Ryders. Close by the edge of town was the Pence farm. These names and many others became sort of a background of our childhood. Many of these friends and neighbors were as close to Mother's heart as her own family. Second and third generations of these families became our friends.

The "Mundis" home, located on "The Old National Trail" had been a "Wayside Inn" in those very early days. The National Trail was the route traveled by many leaving the distant EAST for the new lands of the great WEST.

During the summer of 1910, I had the exciting experience of riding along a portion of the Old Trail that passed by the doorway of our Mother's Birthplace - picked wild berries in a nearby woods and helped prepare dinner for the men who were threshing wheat grown on Grandfather Weist's farm. Mother's brother and his son were still operating the farm at that time.

## *The Old School House*

We walk along Main Street - none of the many changes quicken our feeling of regret as does the sight of the Old School House.

Although the size of the building nor its equipment, in any sense, qualified it as a modern School Building, there is deep regret that it has not been put to some worth while use rather than allowed to fall into complete disuse and decay.

Memories centered about this School House are too many to put into words - too much a part of the various facets of our growth from childhood to the day we gathered together all our books - our pencils and our pens - closed our desk and, for the last time, took our coat from the hook in the cloak room.

The belfry no longer houses the bell that rang out the beginning of each school day and called us back to class from recess and the dinner hour.

The tone of this bell may not have ranked high among the many cast in that far away day, but we would like to feel that somewhere it still calls children to classes or sounds out the hour for Morning Prayers or Evening Vespers.



## *The Turner Hall*

The here and now is lost in a maze of nostalgia as we pass the corner where once stood the "Turner Hall".

The "Turners' Society" gave to the Village this Building, well equipped as a Gymnasium, with Bowling Alleys - a Stage with Foot Lights and varied sets of painted Scenery - a Dance Floor and a Kitchen with a Dining Area.

This "Hall" provided a background for all forms of entertainment - was, so to speak, the center of the Social life of the Village and, to a degree, its Cultural life as well.

This was a time when practically all entertainment was provided by home talent. There was, for that day and time, a considerable talent in the Community. The population had gradually become predominately German and among the German people there has always been a fondness for music as well as considerable talent. I distinctly recall a large group of German men, known as the "Maennerchor" who gave numerous well received programs entirely in German.

I recall, while still quite young, the excitement among the "Belles" and the "Beaus" when some special "Ball" was being planned. "Little pitchers have big ears"

and I remember some of the conversations between mothers regarding the "gowns" their daughters would wear. Miss Barbara, the Village Dressmaker, was kept quite busy making many of their "creations". I can still see one Mrs. Schrieber had made for her daughter, Tillie Fry. A trip to St. Louis for special shopping and a great deal of planning went into this particular dress - a pale green nun's veiling, (very light wool), "artfully" designed and trimmed in pink velvet forget-me-nots .....oh me!

Of course, I was too young to attend any of these affairs, but was keenly interested in all the news and "gossip" brought home by the older brothers and sisters - and the songs they sang. I all but wept over "the hearts that were broken" - "After the Ball is Over" and that poor girl that was a "rich man's darling" but "Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage". They were as real to me as if they had lived down the street.

Time moved along and in our early teens we were a part of the Audience at each Program given by "The Marine Literary Society". To be selected to "Recite" at one of these Programs marked one with distinction. Earl's favorite number was "Asleep at the Switch" which he gave with all the expression required to properly narrate this great tragedy. Ora's favorite was "Kate Shelly". Just what Kate did to bring honor to her name I fail to recall but am certain it was something most heroic. However, Ora's most frequent appearances were with one or more of the several

singing groups. Henry and Ora, with Mr. & Mrs. Bishop, (School Principal), were a Quartette frequently on Program. Edith's knowledge was shown in "Essays", usually with some Historical interest.

There were, of course, Debating Teams - Affirmative and Negative speakers chosen from among the Society's members. Discussions of various subjects presented quite "heated" arguments and the Judges were put to the test of showing "Fair" judgment in deciding the winning side.

Again time moved on and after leaving School, for a period of perhaps ten years, a Group known as the Marine Dramatic Club, under the management of brother Earl, "produced" two home talent "dramas" a year.

Is it at all strange that the feeling of nostalgia should enshroud us as we find not one stick or stone of what was once the center of entertainment and much pleasure to all who lived in this small town.









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PICTURES THAT HANG ON MEMORY'S WALL S



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